

ROBIN WILLIAMS REMEMBERED

By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



The news that Robin Williams died by suicide hit me like a sucker punch. I was stunned, shocked and filled with disbelief. As the news became reality, a flood of memories came to mind. I first fell for Robin Williams as a stand-up comedian who was well on his way to taking over the eccentric comedy throne whenever Jonathan Winters was ready to give it up. Then, as the out-of-this-world Mork, Robin Williams came into our living rooms week after week showing us more of his genius and talent. His mind worked at warp speed and few could keep up with his rapid fire observations and sub-atomic comic riffs.

His album, *Reality, What a Concept*, gave us all a clear picture of what to expect from his manic mind. He was nonstop unstoppable. When he decided to take on the serious moments, he did it not just as an actor, but as someone who knew first-hand about the underlying suffering of someone who battled depression, substance use and whose recovery always hung by a tenuous thread.

On August 11, 2014 that thread that kept him here with us snapped. In one moment of despondent impulsivity, we lost one of the greatest performers and, sadly, to the co-occurring disorder that haunted him for decades. Losing him reminds us all that each of us is vulnerable and that, at any time, given the right circumstances, we could fall. Before he fell, Robin Williams gave us so much to remember.

He was the Fisher King. His sensitivity brought enlightenment to his roles in *Awakenings*, *Dead Poets Society* and *Good Will Hunting*, and as Patch Adams. His comedy is self-evident in *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *Good Morning Vietnam*, *The Birdcage* and *Midnight at the Museum*. His heart and soul are there in all resplendent colors in *What Dreams May Come*. His darker side clearly came out in *One Hour Photo* and *Insomnia*. These and so many other roles will continue to remind us that the brightest stars burn quickly and brightly, and all too briefly – and always gone too soon.

No matter what Robin Williams did, he did it brilliantly. No one will ever imitate him and no one could ever take his place. They will not make another.

So, thank you, Robin Williams, for so many years of laughs and tears, and for never being afraid to be yourself. Whatever inner demons you may have battled, they did not destroy your love, your talent, your genius or the legacy of work that you leave behind. I hope that you are getting ready to headline the most outrageous comedy line-up that

heaven has to offer. You are loved and will be missed by millions. I am only one of so many who will remember you and your beautiful mind, heart and spirit.



Robin Williams

July 21 1951-August 11 2014

